(c) and (d) Following steps have been taken for attending the complaints expeditiously :-

(i) Computerisation of fault repair system.

(ii) Use of modern testing instruments for localizing and rectifying the faults on telephone cables.

(iii) All efforts are being made to reduce the number of faults which include introduction of ducts, use of jelly filled cables, use of reliable transmission media, upgradation of external plants, etc.

(e) Improvement of maintenance is a continuous process. The improvement are being brought about effectively and systematically.

[English]

Sale of Essential Commodities

1819. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether permission has been given to the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the sale of essential commodities outside the State;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) its impact on the prices on wheat in open market;

(d) whether the above decision has encouraged smuggling of foodgrains on Indo-Nepal border; and

(e) if so, the steps being proposed to stop such smuggling and to stablise wheat prices in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) No such permission has been given to Government of Uttar Pradesh. However, there are no restrictions on inter-state movement of wheat from Uttar Pradesh. Wheat is a delicenced commodity in U.P. since January, 1995.

(c) The Government of U.P. has reported the following average wholesale Price of wheat :

2.1.1996	-	Rs.451/- per quintal
1.5.1996	-	Rs.403/- per quintal
3.6.1996	-	Rs.423/- per quintal
12.7.1996	-	Rs.480/- per quintal

(d) In view of answer to part (a) & (b) above, question does not arise.

(e) The State Government has taken steps to increase the availability of foodgrains in Public Distribution and Revamped Public Distribution. During June, 1996 the off-take of wheat has gone up to 55% of allocation against average off-take of about 3% during 1995 in the PDS. The off-take under RPDS has also increased to about 85% of allocation in June. The Food Department of Government of U.P. operates 13 check posts to check illegal movement of foodgrains.

Withdrawal of Air Services

1820. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has withdrawn Air services from some routes during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97, so far;

(b) if so, the details of such routes;

(c) whether the Government propose to re-introduce flights in some of these routes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d) Depending upon commercial viability the air lines introduce new services or withdraw from the existing routes/sectors. However, the flight schedules of operators are approved subject to their fulfilling route dispersal guidelines laid down by the Government.

Unemployed Blinds

1821. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of educated blind unemployed persons in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the State Governments and the Union Governments do not provide jobs to them as per the reservation quota;

(c) if so, whether the Government are considering a proposal to provide jobs to these educated blind persons according to their qualifications;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) According to the Ministry of Labour DGE & T, the Live Register of the Special Employment Exchanges for the phsycially Handicapped persons does not have a separate category for educated blinds. State-wise number of unemployed blind persons, both educated and uneducated, on such register is enclosed as statement.

(b) Associations/Organisations of the Blind has been making representations that the reservation quota for the blind is not being filled up.

(c) to (e). With the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, statutory provision has been made that every appropriate Government shall appoint in every establishment such percentage of

vacancies not less than three percent for persons or class of persons with disability of which one percent each shall be reserved for persons suffering from

(i) blindness or low vision;

(ii) hearing impairment;

(iii) locomotor disability or cerebral palsy, in the posts identified for each disability.

STATEMENT

S.No.	State/UT	No. of unemployed blinds on live register of the Spl. Employment Exchanges for the physically handicapped as on 31.12.1995.
1.	Bihar	196
2.	Gujarat	399
3.	Karnataka	757
4.	Kerala	183
5.	Madhya Pradesh	300
6.	Maharashtra	336
7.	Manipur	152
8.	Orissa	261
9.	Rajasthan	166
10.	Tamil Nadu	1,977
11.	Tripura	129
12.	Uttar Pradesh	153
13.	West Bengal	1,000
14.	Delhi	673
	Total	6,682

Safeguarding the Interests of Minorities and Weaker Sections

1822 SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the commissions/bodies or committees which are presently engaged in the work of safeguarding the interest of minorities and weaker sections of the society;

(b) the amount spent by the Government on each of the above bodies during each of the last three years; and

(c) the number of reports submitted by them together with the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) The names of the Commission Bodies which are presently engaged in the work of safeguarding the interest of Minorities and weaker sections of the society is given in statement I.

(b) The amount spent by the Government on each of the above Commissions/Bodies during each of the last three years is given in statement-II.

(c) These Commissions/Corporations have already laid some of their Annual Reports in the Parliament and some are under process. The recommendations of the National Commission for SCs & STs and Minorities Annual Reports have been received and are under process.

STATEMENT I

Name of Commissions/Corporations

Commissions

1. National Commission for SCs/STs.
2. National Commission for Safai Karmacharis.
3. National Commission for Backward Classes.
4. National Commission for Minorities.

Corporations

1. National Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Finance & Development Corporation.
2. National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporaton.
3. National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation.
4. National Safai Karamachari Finance & Development Corporation.

STATEMENT II

S.No.	Name of the Commission/Corporations.	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
1	2	3	4	5
1.	National Commissioner for SCs/STs	2.02	2.46	2.57
2.	National Commission for Safai Kurmacharis	0.00	0.50	0.78
3.	National Commission for Backward Classes.	0.51	1.50	0.55
4.	National Commission for Minorities.	0.91	1.10	1.38